SERMON

Lionel Hartley

Two Types of Surrender

Two Types of Surrender
(A sermon by Lionel Hartley)

Hymn 330 Take My Life and Let it Be
Hymn 616 Soldiers of Christ Arise
Hymn 309 I Surrender All

PRAYER: ***(Recite an adaptation of Psalms 19:14)***

"Around the trenches — the long battle front that extends for over thirty miles — the country wears a sombre and melancholy aspect, a grey, sickly pallor. The fields are bare — there is nothing left in them to ravage and rend; war — fierce, thundering war — is master and god of the soil; the trees are gaunt and leafless; the entire countryside is pockmarked with shells; the roads have become roads of ruts and furrows; there are rows on rows of graves." ***(That was a quote from the English novelists, Alice and Claude Askew.)***

It is in such an environment as this that we can possibly picture a hopelessly outnumbered soldier, his rations and ammunition exhausted, waving an empty rifle in the air. On the bayonet is tied a flapping make-shift white flag. He is surrendering.

Tragically, this type of surrender is not to a friend, but to the enemy.

Christian surrender is very different – our surrender is to a friend. He who is called in Matthew 11:19 "the friend of sinners" is none other than Jesus Christ, himself.

From pulpits and public platforms for generations we have heard of the necessity of 'putting self aside' and surrendering our will. Today I would like to be a little more specific as we look together at these two very types of surrender.

The word surrender comes from the Old French word '*surrendre*' meaning to "give up, or to deliver over" to someone or something.
So what's the difference between surrender to our friend and flying the white flag?

When a soldier was recruited into the military, he was do nothing of himself, in fact he would have been ordered not to do his own thing, but to submit to authority. However, when a soldier surrenders to the enemy, he has to swallow his pride, then make and fly a white flag.

During the Second World War, my mother, along with other ladies in our district went door-to-door collecting men's handkerchiefs for the war effort. These were then dyed a rusty khaki and brown colour by soaking them in a Condy's Crystals (Potassium Permanganate) mixture.

These dark coloured handkerchiefs were then sent to our heroes in the trenches, as clean white handkerchiefs would be far too conspicuous against the khaki uniforms of the camouflaged soldiers.

I remember asking my Dad, who fought in trench warfare, where a soldier would get a white surrender flag in a muddy trench.

He replied that to make and use a white surrender flag would be the ultimate humiliation as the only white articles that many had were the love letters from their sweetheart back home. To make a surrender flag out of those would be unthinkable.

We read about a warning not to submit to the enemy in Acts 23:20-21. Turn there with me please. Acts 23:20-21. In this story, Paul's young nephew whispers a warning to the chief captain *(Quote Acts 23:20-21).*

Good advice from the mouth of youth.

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will often have special privileges granted, such as leave to visit family, or on retirement a war pension or an allotment of land. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy has his privileges stripped away.

Even the soldiers in the armies of Israel had special privileges granted – in places like Numbers 31:32, 53; Deuteronomy 2:35 and Deuteronomy 3:7 all say similar things such as, "All the livestock and the plunder from their cities we carried off for ourselves."
Thank God for the privileges that He gives us each and every day.

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will have a uniform provided. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy has his uniform removed, he may be given prison clothes or may even possibly suffer nakedness.

Soldiers in the Roman army at the time of Christ were given a robe as part of their uniform. When a Christian soldier surrenders to the authority of God's Kingdom, he too will receive from Christ a robe. More than that, his entire uniform is provided.

Ephesians 6:11-17 says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17) And take the helmet of salvation …"

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Palestinian states. The following day, Swissair flight 442 left Lydda Airport in Tel Aviv for Paris. On board that airplane were

two unsuspecting men who were oblivious to the other's presence. Captain Abdul-Aziz Kerine was on a mission for the Syrian government to purchase weapons for an anticipated war with the Jews.

Just a few rows away, Ehud Avriel was contemplating a similar mission as David Ben-Gurion had sent him to buy weapons for an expected conflict with the Arabs. After landing in Paris, both men took different routes but ended up at the same place, the Zbrojovka Brno company in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

In an irony of ironies, these two men, representing opposing nations, flew on the same plane to buy weapons from the same company to give to their armies to fight each other!

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will have all necessary weapons provided. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy surrenders also his weaponry. Ephesians 6:17 continues, "[Take] the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

In New Testament times, the Roman soldier's main weapons were a short sword for stabbing called a '*gladius*' and a long spear, or javelin called a *pilum*, for throwing. The javelin had a sharp iron point, and a thin, bendy shaft.

When it hit an enemy's shield, the point stuck in, but the shaft bent. This made it difficult to pull out. The long

spear shaft got in the way, so the enemy soldier had to throw away his shield.

Artillery soldiers fired giant catapults, called '*onagers*' in Latin, machines that fired rocks or balls of burning tar.

The Romans also used big wind-up crossbows called '*ballistas*'. Some soldiers were paid with a ration of one of the most valuable commodities in the Bible lands - salt.

This was called a '*salarium*' and we get our English word *Salary* from this Latin word. It is within this context that history records the expression, "No soldier worth his salt would ever be caught without his munitions at the ready."

The writer to the Hebrews in Hebrews 4:12 writes, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Do you have the two-testamented sword?

Listen to these verses from the book of Revelation: Revelation 1:16 – "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword."

Revelation 2:12 – "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges."

And Revelation 2:16 – "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

When we surrender to God, He will give us all the resources we need to fight the Good Fight of Faith.

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will be expected to fight. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy cannot or will not fight.

It was in the fourth Century that John Chrysostom wrote, "You are but a poor soldier of Christ if you think you can overcome without fighting, and suppose you can have the crown without the conflict."

Paul the apostle told the young bishop Timothy, in 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses." (NIV)

In 1854, an 18 years young lady read John 9:4, "I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work".

That young girl, Anna Coghill (or Anna Walker as she was known then), penned these words: (

Quote hymn 375, "Work, for the night is coming.")

In the epistle of James chapter four and verse seven, James encourages us by saying, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

The English word 'resist' is translated from the Greek word 'anthistemi', meaning to oppose, and not to surrender to the enemy, Satan or his evil demons.

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will have all his meals provided. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy can look forward only to meagre rations, and even possible starvation and famishment.

When we surrender ourselves to God, He invites us to his banqueting table. Better than any regular soldier can expect in his mess hall.

Open your scriptures to Psalm 23:5 and read with me.
(Quote Psalm 23:5)

Listen and read with me the wonderful promise in Isaiah 55:1.
Isaiah 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

(Quote chapter 33, Vss 15 and 16.)

Psalm 107 Vss 8 and 9 read, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men … for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will often be honoured and respected. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy has his country's and community's disrespect and hatred. He will be ridiculed, despised, scorned, detested and treated with contempt.

No wonder we read in 1 Chronicles 29:24, "All the officers and mighty men, as well as all of King David's sons, pledged their submission to King Solomon." Do you want to be honoured?

Read with me God's promise to both the Nation of Israel and to you and me as citizens of Spiritual Israel. I am looking at Deuteronomy 26, Vss18 & 19 (I'm reading this from the NIV): "And the Lord has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honour
high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised."

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will become free to be and feel part of an effective working team. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy has no freedom – only confinement, restriction, incarceration, immurement, imprisonment and captivity.

Jesus said, as recorded in John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Dr Luke also records in his gospel that Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1 in the synagogue on a certain Sabbath day. Look at it with me. Isaiah 61:1-3 ***(Quote Isaiah 61:1-3)***

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will need to be brave. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy sees that it is not necessary to be brave – maybe he could even be a coward, a poltroon, a craven.

In Joshua 1:7, the Lord told Joshua, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

Then in chapter 23:6 we hear Joshua tell the people, "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is

written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside there from to the right hand or to the left."

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he will be disciplined for growth and taught how to stay alive. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy is disciplined as punishment, with possible annihilation; possible death.

Psalm 94:12 is a beatitude – a comforting phrase that starts with the word blessed, meaning *happy*.

Psalm 94:12 in the NIV reads, "(Psalms 94:12) Blessed is the man [that] you discipline, O Lord. [Blessed is] the man you teach from your law."

Romans 6:13 reads, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.

And verse 16 continues, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto a righteous life."

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he is often regarded as a hero. But he

who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy is considered to be a traitor, a renegade, a recreant, a turncoat.

The Old French word '*traitor*' appeared in the 11th Century from the Latin word '*traditorem*' meaning a "betrayer," or "one who surrenders." We get our English word '*tradition*' from this root, meaning something handed down.

2 Chronicles 30:8 talks about this tradition when it says, "Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield [and surrender] yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the Lord your God."

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he enjoys camaraderie, fellowship, cheerful community. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy is treated with suspicion, gloom, loneliness, and isolation.

Most soldiers in the Roman Empire at the time of Christ came from countries outside of Italy. Although every Roman soldier was a Roman citizen, there were Roman soldiers from Africa, France, Germany, the Balkans, Spain and the Middle East. Camaraderie was vital to the coherence of the military machine.

Hebrews 10:25 talks about the importance of community

when the writer admonishes, (Quote verse)

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

When a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he has hope. This comes from a bond of friendship almost likened to a marriage. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy has despair and becomes divorced from society.

Only men could be in the Roman Army. No women. Roman soldiers had to be at least 20 years old. He was not supposed to get married while he was in the military, but regarded his legion as his family. Soldiers had to stay in the army for at least 25 years. Then they could retire, with a pension or a gift of land to farm. Old soldiers often settled down to old age together in a military town or colonia.

Thank You God, for our church family!

(Quote a transition: Psalm 107:8)

And finally, when a soldier surrenders to his nation or kingdom's military authority, he fights for a cause with the back-up support of the rest of his platoon. But he who flies the white flag and surrenders to the enemy is all alone in his fight for survival.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "No man 'is worth his salt' who is not ready at all times to risk his well-being, to risk his body, to risk his life, in a great cause."

Who's side are you on? Exodus 32:26 reads, "Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, 'Who is on the Lord's side?'"

Today I stand at the gate to tomorrow and ask, "Who is on the Lord's side?"

The motto of the US Marine Corps is *'Semper Fi'*, a Latin phrase meaning "Always [be] faithful." In other words, "Surrender only to your own leader's nation or kingdom, never to the enemy."

Then, as a good soldier of Christ, you can boldly exclaim, as Paul did in his second recorded letter to Timothy in Chapter 4 verses 7 and 8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

In a book entitled *'Near to the Heart of God'* by Robert J Morgan, the author tells of an incident in the life of the evangelist Judson Van DeVenter that occurred around 1890.

Van DenVenter was an accomplished musician and worked as an art teacher and supervisor of art in local public schools where he lived. Records reveal that he was an active member in his church and involved in evangelistic meetings.

We can suppose it was because of his fervent faith and involvement in the church that his friends encouraged him to leave his field of teaching and art to become a full-time evangelist.

An account left by Van DenVenter during this period reads: "The song ['I Surrender All'] was written while I was conducting a meeting at East Palestine, Ohio. … For some time I had struggled between developing my talents in the field of art and going into full-time evangelistic work. At last the pivotal hour of my life came, and I surrendered all. A new day was ushered into my life. I became an evangelist and discovered down deep in my soul a talent hitherto unknown to me. God had hidden a song in my heart, and touching a tender chord, he caused me to sing [I Surrender All]."

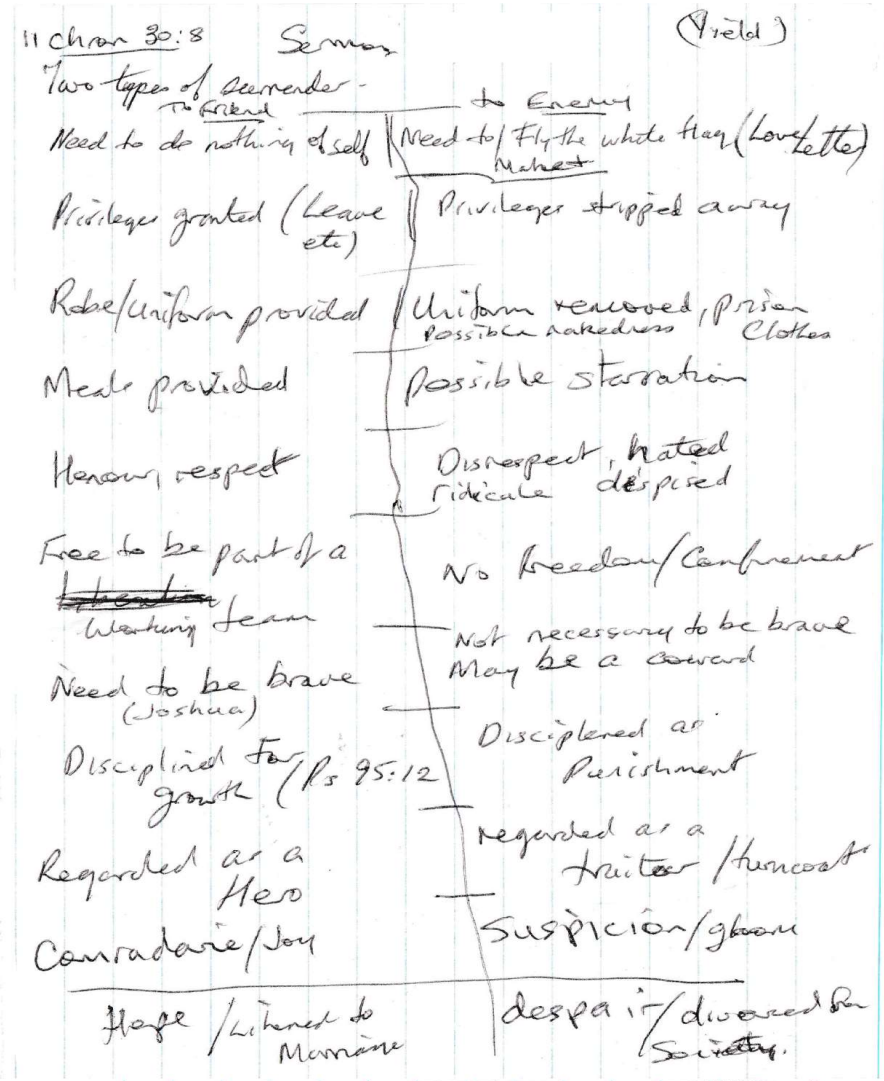
And so, our closing hymn, 'I Surrender All', was born.

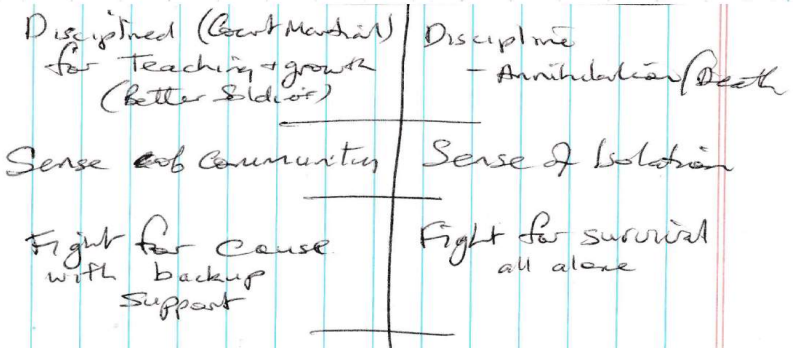
Let's sing together now Hymn 309, I Surrender All.

Benediction

Dr Lionel Hartley
Itinerant Interfaith Preacher
admin@lrhartley.com
www.lrhartley.com

Original notes:




Disciplined (Court Martial) for Teaching + growth (Better Soldier)
Discipline - Annihilation/Death
Sense of Community
Sense of Isolation
Fight for Cause with backup support
Fight for survival all alone